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As pastor X steps out of bed he slips a neat disguise on.
That halo round his priestly head is really his horizon.

<div align="right">(Hein, 1966)</div>

Like the pastor in Piet Hein's grook, researchers are often afflicted by "halos." Understanding any phenomenon depends on the ability to push limiting horizons as far away as possible. The difficulty is that halos are hard to recognize. As in the case of the priestly disguise, they blend in well with the everyday world, even to the point of seeming desirable. One of these limiting horizons is *devaluing the history of social phenomena.* This does not mean that historical study is not valued at all, but that historical perspective is underutilized in the design and interpretation of contemporary studies. The purpose of this paper is to examine how devaluing history limits research horizons, and to show how historical perspective helps see through this halo in social research. First, I need to explain why history is devalued and define what I mean by historical perspective.

Historical perspective refers to understanding a subject in light of its earliest phases and subsequent evolution. Historical perspective differs from history because the object of historical perspective is to sharpen one's vision of the present, not the past. Using written documents and artifacts to study attitudes during the Depression is historical research, whereas using historical information about the Depression to explain differences in attitudes today is historical perspective. History

provides the raw materials for historical perspective. Yet, despite the fact that it seems reasonable and logical to understand any subject in light of its past, historical perspective is frequently overlooked as a tool for social research. One reason for this is that history, the stuff of which historical perspective is made, is devalued because it is tied to the notion of *progress.*

The notion of historic progress is deeply ingrained in the culture of the Western world. Nisbet (1980) states that the idea of progress, from the time of the Greeks to the present, consists of an assumption of inexorable change over time from lower to higher states of knowledge and well-being. In America, this idea results in devaluing the past.

The history of this country is steeped in stories illustrating that progress is the mission of the American people. Early settlers adopted an ideology of divine mission--to endure and conquer the harsh New World--as much from the reality of the situation as from a need to rational-ize their emigration and to promote their adopted land to those who stayed behind. "Later politicians, statesmen, and publicists...continued to think of the history of America in terms of conquest of the continent and ultimately of the diffusion of its ideology throughout the world" (Handlin, 1979, p. 54). The cinematic image is one of a young man on horseback, riding into the sunset, and facing, with great determination, whatever the future will bring. This picture survives today. Test pilots and astronauts are idealized because they risk their lives in pursuit of progress. Status within these occupations is accorded to those who explore the "outside of the envelope," who push their aircraft to the very limits of its technical capability (Wolfe, 1979). The legend is one of a

land where there is no looking back, where the fate of the nation is laid in the hands of young warriors, and where the battlecry is progress. In this American vision, "history," as Henry Ford once said, "is bunk."

The preeminence of progress as a cultural value is antithetical to the use of historical perspective. One cannot both dismiss the past as primitive and, at the same time, value it as a key to understanding the present. An example is the statement "social research has come a long way," which, like most statements linked to progress, presupposes that the present is both different from and better than the past. Such statements are often made because there is a widely shared assumption that the legitimacy of social science depends on its ability to emulate the physical sciences. Although the idea of historic progress is appropriate in the physical sciences, it is less useful in the social sciences because of a basic difference in the subjects of study.

A human being is not a fundamental unit for study in the same way an electron is. Every electron is exactly like every other; and, although man-made explanations of physical laws have changed, all evidence indicates that the phenomena these laws explain have remained unaltered for billions of years. So far, there have been perhaps fifty billion human beings (Wilford, 1981), and we are not even close to exhausting the genetic possibilities. In addition, the behavior of each individual is influenced by a multitude of changing factors, such as culture, geographical location, age, and weather. Physics does not need to distinguish 14th from 20th century electrons, rich ones from poor ones, because they are all the same. But when we study people, despite the continuing historical presence of "war, taxes, brigandage, bad government, (and)

insurrection" (Tuchman, 1979, p. xiii), we cannot ignore differences between the human experience of the 1980's, the 1930's, or the 1330's. Historical perspective reminds us that explanations for human behavior must be linked to a social and historical context. It is unfortunate that social research often uses the past only as an index for measuring historic progress. Past work provides the references and backdrop against which current work is contrasted as new and better.

In summary, history and historical perspective are two different ways of looking at the past. History is studied as an end in itself. Historical perspective is not studied: it is used. Without it, social research is limited by the culturally embedded and seemingly desirable halo of the present. What social researchers learn may be accurate in the specific situations and for the people studied today, but whether these findings will be useful twenty years from now or whether they would have been useful fifty years ago cannot be known unless historical perspective is used. I believe that historical perspective can play a more important role in social research in three ways. First, historical perspective permits the identification of the relative stability or instability of phenomena. Second, it provides alternative explanations for phenomena; and third, using historical perspective in the formulation of problems opens new areas of research in its own right.

The Stability of Phenomena Over Time: Historical Perspective and Midlife

Although many factors that influence human behavior change slowly and cannot be seen from "up close," they quickly become clear when viewed over a sufficient span of time. It seems obvious now, for example, that one should not design a study attempting to understand occupational choice using only male college students. But the fact that many studies in the past twenty years did just that shows that the obvious was not always so obvious. The exclusive use of such subjects in early occupational research led to theories in which occupational choice was seen as a fixed life decision made in late adolescence. Eventually, people realized that development in lives does not end at age 21 and began studying changes over the entire life span. Schein's (1978) work on career anchors, for example, explicitly recognizes that occupational self-concepts are not only unfixed at age 21, but emerge only as a result of an individual's actual work experiences over time. (See also the work of Ginzberg et al. (1951) and Ginzberg's later refutation in 1972.) If findings can be repeated in many different situations, one is more confident that theories are based on stable as opposed to changing characteristics. For some sorts of questions, using the historical record as a point of comparison is an ideal method for testing findings in different situations. An examination of the historical dependence of presumably universal midlife characteristics provides an example.

When I studied people making midlife career changes (1980, 1979), I was struck by the list of characteristics of midlife presented in the literature. People in midlife are presumed, for example, to face feelings of job entrapment, changes in family relationships as children leave home, know-

ledge of the limitations of their ultimate career success, and a critical awareness of physical aging and death.

I became interested in the stability of these presumably inevitable midlife characteristics when a subject told me she would not have thought of making her career change (public school administrator to marketing in private industry) twenty years ago because of differences in the social climate. In order to explore the stability of midlife characteristics, I examined several 17th and 18th century diaries, including the midlife writings of Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall. Observations in the lives of these diarists suggest differences between their experience and present day descriptions of the midlife experience.

Advances in medical technology affecting birth and death rates are responsible for significant changes in life experiences over the past 300 years. Birth rates were high in colonial times; thus, these men did not experience the midlife empty nest syndrome since there were no gaps between generations. Samuel Sewall had fourteen children born at regular intervals between the time he was 25 and 50 years old, and Cotton Mather had fifteen children. As shown in the following excerpts, Samuel Sewall at age 44 was simultaneously concerned with the approaching adulthood of his eldest son and the death of a young daughter:

> Kept a Day of Fasting with Prayer for the Conversion of my Son, and his settlement in a Trade that might be good for Soul and body. I am very sorrowfull by reason of the unsettledness of my Samuel.
> (January/February 1696) Samuel Sewall, Jr., Age 17.

> This day I remove poor little Sarah into my Bed-Chamber, where about Break of Day December 23 she gives up the Ghost in Nurse Cowell's arms.
> (December 1696) Sarah Sewall, Age 2.

Certainly the colonists had much more experience with death than do individuals in modern times. The difference lies primarily in the death rates of children and mothers in childbirth. Nine of Sewall's fourteen children died during his lifetime and only two of Mather's children survived him. The two diarists exhibit a fascination with death, and apparently this attitude was not uncommon at the time (Vinovskis, 1978). Both diaries report many deaths, yet few marriages and births are recorded, except for those in the family. This is particularly noteworthy in the diary of a minister, who certainly was involved in sacraments of all kinds.

Sickness and death were somewhat mystifying to 17th century Americans. These people did not have access to the medical knowledge about disease and the confidence in treatment so commonplace in the 20th century. Other than describing physical symptoms, Sewall and Mather were constrained to a limited vocabulary to describe all ills. For example, people were said to have "convulsions," a bad "flux," "cholic," or a "sickly disorder." It is no wonder that although doctors and nurses were called in to heal the sick, the alternatives of getting well or dying were considered to be in the hands of God. The following is Cotton Mather's description of the illness and subsequent death of his mother-in-law.

> My Wife's Mother, took her Bed, very sick of a Feavour, that Night... Shee dyed, on the Friday Night, about ten o'clock. Now I count it a singular Favour of God unto mee, (and it might bee so unto her!) that tho' shee were delirious the first Night of her Illness, yett shee had the free Use of Reason, all the rest of her little Time. And hereby, I enjoy'd an Opportunity for two Dayes together, to talk with her, and pray with her, and do all that it was possible for mee to do, in assisting her, about the great Acts of resigning her Spirit unto the Lord.
> (February 1698)

The notion that images of death have changed over the centuries is also supported by Aries' (1981) recent book *The Hour of Our Death.* If death is perceived so differently now than it was then, how can we presume to base a theory of midlife behavior on a characteristic that appears tied to a historical time period instead of being an immutable human characteristic? The use of historical data as a comparison point is critical for hypothesis testing as well as a general help in understanding what we have learned.

Alternative Explanation: Historical Perspective and Job Satisfaction

Historical perspective provides one of many paths to understanding why people behave as they do. Moreover, because it frequently remains unused, historical perspective helps bring forth alternative explanations. How historical perspective generates alternative explanations can be seen in a survey I recently conducted in a large electric utility. The sample includes 488 exempt employees who range in age from 22 to 65 and whose tenure with the company varies from one to 44 years. In one series of questions, subjects were asked about levels of satisfaction with various aspects of their work. The literature on job satisfaction generally shows that satisfaction increases the longer an individual has been with an organization (Andrisani et al., 1977; Quinn et al., 1974), but data from this company suggest the opposite conclusion. [1]

One problem with studies of job satisfaction is that they rarely separate the effects of organizational tenure and age on satisfaction. Since a positive relationship between age and job satisfaction has also been

observed (Andrisani et al., 1977; Janson & Martin, 1981), it is possible that the positive relationship between organizational tenure and satisfaction is a function of the subject's age.

Weick's (1979) concept of retained histories supports the findings that both organizational tenure and age are related to satisfaction. He argues that retained histories are an important selection mechanism through which the ambiguity of enacted events is reduced and interpreted. "Most efforts at sensemaking involve interpretation of previous happenings and of writing plausible histories that link these previous happenings with current outcomes" (Weick, 1979, p. 13). When we talk about people interpreting the present, we are really talking about how they see the present in terms of the past. The generation and maintenance of both individual and collective interpretations can thus be understood as an outcome of historical perspective.

Both organizational tenure and age imply a set of retained histories that influences the individual's interpretation of present events. Since there is an overlap in the retained histories that constitute tenure and those that constitute age, one would expect that if either variable is related to satisfaction, the other will also be related to satisfaction. The distinction between individual and collective retained histories suggests that there might be differences between the impact of organizational tenure and age on satisfaction. The retained memories about organizational life that come from working in an organization over time are more likely to be shared among people who have similar organizational tenure than are the retained memories about life shared by people who are the same age. Theories of organizational socialization also support this view, particularly

in situations where employees are socialized collectively (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Therefore, people of the same age who have long organizational tenure might be expected to share different views about organizational life than a comparable group of people with short organizational tenure.

In order to examine the hypothesis that organizational tenure has a unique influence on satisfaction apart from age, I identified thirteen individuals who have been with the company for fifteen years or more and matched each subject with a second subject who has been with the organization for two years or less. Subjects were matched on age, sex, career level, functional area, and education.[2]

The results show that there is a significant difference in the satisfaction levels of the two groups. Subjects with longer organizational tenure are less satisfied than subjects with shorter organizational tenure on job satisfaction, current occupation, and about feelings of personal success and career progress.

Although the sample is small, the findings do not contradict the hypothesis that differences in satisfaction can be attributed to organizational tenure alone and that retained histories explain those differences. The question remains as to why retained histories generated the results obtained in this case. Information about the history of the company sheds light on this question.

In the early 1900's this utility was run by a particular ethnic and religious group. People came in by knowing others from the same background and they worked their way up in the organization only if they were part of the dominant culture. This created a strong association

between the company and the community. As described by one employee, "This place was paternalistic. You took care of your own." As the city grew, as sources of cheap energy became scarce, and as government regulation of the industry became more pervasive, the character of the company changed. Today, efficient management is seen as more important than community ties and affirmative action is perceived to be more influential than "connections" for getting a job. Before 1970, hardly any employees other than those just starting work were hired from outside. Now fifteen percent have not spent their entire careers in the company.

Based on this historical information, the negative relationship observed between organizational tenure and satisfaction with career progress might be explained by the fact that employees with longer tenure are well aware of the recent increase in hiring from outside and see their own career progress as comparing unfavorably with that of the newcomers. Relative deprivation theory suggests that those with longer tenure will be less satisfied because they believe their occupational rewards are not comparable to those of significant others. (Martin, 1981). In this electric utility, identification of newcomers as the relevant group of significant others was suggested by historical information on the company.

In summary, historical perspective pushes one to look for interpretations in examining job satisfaction. In this case, historical perspective provides an explanation for why variables like organizational tenure and age are related to satisfaction. Whenever the definition of an explanatory variable, like organizational tenure or age, represents an individual's cumulative experience, research results are automatically a function of

retained histories. In addition, using historical perspective suggests alternative explanations. Knowing the company history, for example, helps identify the relevant group of significant others that makes relative deprivation theory useful in interpreting the negative association observed between organizational tenure and satisfaction.

The Generation of Research Problems and Design

In addition to aiding interpretation and providing situations in which to test the stability of findings, historical perspective is also important for research design and problem formulation. For example, concern for the generalizability of results should be a part of any research design. The study of past events is necessary to estimate the period during which findings are relatively stable. Usually, the time boundaries of present inquiry are defined by default as the length of time during which the study was conducted. Findings can be generalized within that time period but not outside of it. If asked, most researchers probably would say their results apply in a larger time frame, but given the difficulties of assuming historical stability of findings, it is not clear how large a time frame is appropriate. For example, it is reasonable to assume that the description of an organization's culture is valid beyond the specific time during which the data were collected. But how far in the past is the same description valid? We cannot know the future, but by examining the past we can get some idea of whether we are watching a fast moving stream or a slow moving glacier.

The study of adult lives is one area in which historical perspective is recognized as a crucial component in designing studies to observe slow moving phenomena. In the mid-1960's, Schaie (1965) and Baltes (1968) introduced a three-factor model for use in the description and explanation of true changes in adult development. These articles led to a continuing discussion and exploration of how the effects of the three factors, age, cohort, and period, can be untangled (e.g. Buss, 1974; Glenn, 1977; Palmore, 1978; Schaie & Baltes, 1975). Age effects are those attributable to the individual's chronological age, cohort effects are those explained by the similarities among individuals born during the same time, and period effects are those attributable to events in the historical period during which the observations were made. The reason for developing this type of analysis in the study of individuals was to unravel the interconnected effects of age, cohort, and period. How can one decide, for example, whether an observation made of a group of 40 year olds is the result of their age, the fact that they were all born during the same year and have experienced the same social and historical influences during their lives (cohort), or the characteristics of the historical time during which the observations were made (period)? Many examples in the literature show that historical comparison can be very useful in this untangling. The following are two examples showing that if these effects are not taken into account, erroneous conclusions would have been drawn.

Kuhlen (1968) cites a study in which comparison of attitude scores of a group of college students over a fourteen year interval showed a marked trend toward liberalism. At the time of the retest, however, a second sample of college students also was tested and their scores were almost

the same as the retest scores of the first group. Without the comparison of two groups of the same age during different historical times, it would have been impossible to say whether "increasing liberalism" was a result of aging, or of cohort or period effects.

Schaie and Parham (1974) describe findings on changes in attitudes toward social responsibility. Attitudes were measured using a 44 item version of the Social Responsibility Scale from the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1955). Subjects indicated their level of agreement on items such as: 1) A person who does not vote is not a good citizen, 2) If I get too much change in a store I always give it back, and 3) It is all right to get around the law if you don't actually break it. The data were collected from a random sample of individuals between the ages of 21 and 70 at three different times: 1956, 1963, and 1970 (population N=18,000; sample N=2,151). In addition, repeated measurement data were collected from 161 subjects during the same three years. Their results indicate that a study conducted without the multiple time and cohort comparisons possible in this study would have concluded that attitudes toward social responsibility are stable over the adult life span. Instead, through a research design based on historical perspective, they found that attitudes toward social responsibility exhibit several subtle changes. First, concern for social responsibility drops over the three measurement periods. Second, although overall concern declines, younger men in later measurement periods had higher concern for social responsibility than younger men in earlier measurement periods. Also, older men in later measurement periods had lower concern for social responsibility than older men in the earlier measurement periods.

Schaie and Parham speculate that these differences may be the result of social and historical events.

> Perhaps there is a greater opportunity for more political and social involvement recently on the part of the younger male. In the case of older men, perhaps they are relied upon by society to a lesser extent and, due to changes in retirement laws, for instance, disengage at an earlier age. (p. 491)

This study is an example of the use of historical perspective in a variety of ways. First, the study was designed using the assumption that one cannot generalize findings about change over the adult life span using only cross-sectional data. Second, by comparing responses of groups across time, the study examines the stability of attitudes toward social responsibility. Finally, historical perspective was used to interpret the findings. The discovery that attitudes of similar age groups appear to change over time was explained by discussing the differential impact of social and historical conditions on each birth cohort.

What is still missing in these studies is an understanding that the time units selected for study are relevant to the findings. In both studies, longitudinal data were collected at more or less arbitrary times, and age cohorts were selected on the basis of convenience rather than any assumption that these particular age groups were meaningfully different. We learn in the study cited by Kuhlen that liberalism does appear to be affected by the social-historical climate, but we do not know very much more about liberalism. When did the significant attitude changes occur? Did changes in the initial group occur over a short time in response to specific historical events or did they occur slowly over a longer time? Schaie and Parham conclude that people in different generations respond

differently on the social responsibility scale, but generations are defined a priori by seven year age cohorts. What we do not know is whether each seven year period defines an age cohort whose members have similar social and historical experiences, and thus similar attitudes towards social responsibilty, or whether significant differences in attitudes occurred within cohorts.

The historical perspective provided by the age, period, and cohort methodology combined with this concern for defining meaningful units of time can be used to generate new research questions as well as expand current areas of research by looking at old questions in new ways.

For example, in career research, it would be interesting to study organizational occupations longitudinally. We are used to thinking of managerial careers as having a fairly clear set of characteristics. However, there is a new literature suggesting that organizations have life cycles with distinctive characteristics at different stages (Kimberly et al., 1980). It is possible that the organizational career of "manager" adjusts to the life stage of the organization, and thus if we always study managers in middle-aged organizations, it may be that the managerial career characteristics we take for granted are really the result of the age of the organizations we study and not the career itself. Using longitudinal research to study managerial careers over the life of an organization would help answer that question.

A cross-sectional approach to separating out career from organizational life cycle characteristics would be to study organizational career cohorts. In this case, one might compare the characteristics of a single occupation in organizations of different ages. For example, assuming that

police stations are one of the first municipal occupations in any new community, one could compare the career of police in a newly incorporated rural town with the same career in an older, established rural town to examine which career characteristics of police are independent of the organization's stage of development.

In addition, it is also possible that observed career characteristics are the result of the historical period during which the data were collected. I am aware of one unpublished study showing how changes in the meaning of work were the result of period effects. In a study of women flight attendants, Roberta Lessor (1981) found that, as a result of new Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity regulations, flight attendants experienced a dramatic change in the meaning of their work. What they once saw as a temporary job, because of mandatory retirement with marriage or pregnancy, is now seen as a career. It would also be interesting to study how the tremendous drop in demand for engineers in the late 1960's and early 1970's influenced companies' perceptions of the technological obsolescence of their engineers. Today, technological obsolescence is a major issue in R & D organizations, but it is possible that companies' perceptions of obsolescence are a function of demand, and with demand so low in the 1960's, obsolescence might not have been seen as such a serious problem. Certainly, one would expect that the number and type of people who chose to enter engineering changed during that time.

These are just a few examples of questions that are suggested by historical perspective. The analysis made possible by thinking of research design and problem formulation in terms of longitudinal, cohort, and period effects would be particularly useful for anchoring our findings

more clearly to their individual, occupational, organizational, and social origins.

The Halo In Effect: Conclusions About Japanese Business Success

An important example of current work that reaches conclusions unsupported by historical perspective comes from the recent literature on the "Japanese way" in business. The press seems to believe that nobody does it better than the Japanese (Kraar, 1975; *Time,* March 30, 1981). They are more efficient, more productive, and save more of their personal incomes than their counterparts in the West, severely testing the West's feeling of moral superiority in the area of "work."

Japanese success is frequently attributed to East-West cultural dif- ferences (Abegglen, 1958; Ouchi, 1981). Distinct characteristics are assumed to be long-standing and widely-shared within each culture, but not between the cultures. Thus, it has been noted with surprise that Japanese management styles can be transplanted successfully to this coun- try (Ouchi & Jaeger, 1978). Using historical perspective shows that there may be more than meets the cultural eye to understanding why Japanese firms are so productive. Specifically, both the ability to examine the sta- bility of phenomena and the alternative explanations provided by historical perspective suggest a very different conclusion.

One significant difference frequently discussed is the relationship between Japanese managers and workers. Japanese workers are said to expect life-time employment, seniority-based compensation, and a paternalistic or family oriented attitude from their employers. Japanese

managers are expected to know the names of their employees, to labor beside them for some portion of the day, and to be aware of and a resource for employees having personal problems. Since these managers remain with the same company throughout their lives, this approach increases their usefulness and contribution to the company. These characteristics have led to the family analogy for Japanese companies.

However, recent work by Fruin (1980, 1978) suggests that the family analogy does not hold up under the scrutiny of history. According to Fruin's examination of the personnel records of the Kikkoman Shoyu Company, there has been considerable variation in the actual practice of life-time employment, seniority-based compensation, and the family-firm ideology since the company was incorporated in 1918.[3] His study suggests that the length of time groups of employees stay with the company varies directly with their educational level, their average age on entering the company, and economic conditions at the time of entry. Employees entering the company during periods of economic upswing tend to be younger and less educated. These groups of employees receive the most in-house training and have the least transferrable skills, so it is not surprising that they are also the groups that come closest to life-time employment. Only 16.1 percent of all employees entering the firm between 1918 and 1948 with eight years of education were likely to leave the firm within ten years. In contrast, fifty-two percent of all employees entering the firm during the same period with sixteen years of education were likely to leave the firm within ten years.

Economics, World War II, and an increasingly Westernized industrial community had a tremendous impact on Japanese employment practices.

General labor became scarce after the war, partly as a result of the intensification of knowledge-based industry, standardization of the educational system, and adoption of the American ideology of "equal treatment for equally trained employees" (Fruin, 1978, p. 294). Under these conditions, the employment group for whom life-time employment was an appropriate description reversed completely. Those having more education stayed longer than those having less. For employees entering the firm between 1949 and 1976, forty-four percent of those with eight years of education were likely to leave the firm within ten years as opposed to only 6.3 percent of those with sixteen years of education.

Our picture of the Japanese system suggests that seniority-based compensation is a long-standing custom. Before the war, Kikkoman Shoyu Company had two completely different rationales operating in its reward system for employees. One was based on seniority but the other was based on skills. The ideology of the "firm as a family" dictated that the status and authority of managers depended on tradition and service. This produced a system of seniority-based compensation for the more educated employee who was expected to provide leadership in the future. But economically difficult times concurrently put a premium on keeping workers with specific in-house knowledge of Kikkoman, and here, seniority-based compensation gave way to skills-based compensation.

Adherence to the family-firm ideology has also changed dramatically. Before the war, most business organizations were family owned and operated, so that the ideological authority for leadership was vested in the family values of tradition and service. Starting late in the prewar period, ownership became increasingly separated from control of the company.

Government regulation during the war effort forced Kikkoman to divest itself of several major operations, diminishing the families' "prestige and authority within the firm and in the community" (Fruin, 1978, p. 296). In addition, diversification and expansion in the mid-1960's reduced the stock share of the original owner families to around twenty-five percent. As a result, family members withdrew from active management and employees were hired increasingly on their ability to perform in terms of the "bottom line."

> As a consequence organizational leadership has become more formal and less personal. The organization is held together more by rules and regulations and less by ideology and tradition. (Fruin, 1978, p. 296-297)

Fluctuations in the meaning of and adherence to the family-firm ideology appear throughout the history of the Kikkoman Shoyu Company. These changes are linked to the historical relationship between *actual* and *ideological* family participation in the company. This firm has operated, in some form, for three hundred years. An examination of four major phases of ownership and management directly contradicts the assumption that employer-employee relationships in Japan have always been characterized by a family-like holistic concern.

In the first phase, lasting from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, owners financially supported the company but had little to do with operations. Operations were handled by representatives of the owners: *banto, toji,* and *oyakata.*

> With so little direct involvement on the part of owners and with so many separate yet equal spheres of management, workers suffered. Oyakata benefited mainly by fees paid for placing workers, toji concerned themselves with technique and not with industrial relations, and banto worried not at all about workers'

welfare. ...Obviously, at this stage of development, no firm-family analogy would be appropriate to describe an enterprise so fragmented and divided. (Fruin, 1980, p. 443)

A relationship between the actual and ideological family-firm becomes appropriate for the first time during the third phase of development. In 1918, a joint stock company was formed and family-related owners became the actual management, making the "firm as a family" a relevant biological analogy. During the labor strife of the late 1920's, this biological analogy was transformed into what is seen today as the family-firm ideology. In an effort to quell a strike of 218 days, Kikkoman fired 1300 employees and began an employee reeducation program specifically dedicated to instilling the ideology of the firm as family in its workers. This effort mirrored similar efforts on a national level where the emperor as father of the patriarchal state became a central Japanese ideology between the late 19th century and the end of World War II. The family-firm was simultaneously dominant as a biological entity and as a political ideology.

Thus, the family-firm ideology, as practiced in the Kikkoman Shoyu Company, has changed considerably over the past 300 years. Although the description of employer-employee relationships in more recent times adheres to the traditional picture we hold of the Japanese, description of these relationships in earlier times sounds very much like the employer-employee relationships (labor vs. management) of late 19th or early 20th century America where factory workers were considered additional machines (Rodgers, 1978). However, it is also true that many American companies in the past sixty years have adhered to the Japanese family-firm ideology. If Fruin's description is representative, then the electric utility I am studying fits the Japanese model, and it is probable,

given the many family-owned businesses in the United States (Beckhard & Dyer, 1981), that many other American firms fit the same description.

Fruin argues in both articles that Japanese ideology and economics work in tandem. However, his examples, such as the change in dominance of the family-firm ideology, suggest that although ideology may color economic decisions, ultimately, economics has the upper hand.

In summary, Japanese employment practices have varied a great deal over time. Although culture has had a strong influence on worker-employer relationships, these relationships have been affected even more directly by economic and demographic factors, such as employee's educational level, the supply and demand for labor, and war. Thus, the genesis of effective Japanese management practices may come more from cultural similarities--in responses to economic situations--than from cultural differences--in adherence to different cultural ideologies. Using historical perspective in present inquiry puts into relief the complexity of the issues at hand. In this case, it shows that the attribution of Japanese productivity solely to long-standing cultural differences leading to differing personnel practices in East and West is, at best, a simplistic explanation warranting further study.

The Future of Historical Perspective

To conclude, it seems to me that historical perspective is crucial to understanding the work we do in the present. It pushes us to think about alternative explanations for phenomena; helps us to identify more and less stable concepts, which is critical for building theory; and expands our research horizons by suggesting new ways of studying old

questions and controlling for longitudinal, cohort, and period effects. Considerable research has been done on factors within the person, within the occupation, and within the organization, but the influence of larger scale social and historical factors on human behavior is not well understood. Devaluing history will cease to be a "halo" limiting our research horizons once historical perspective is included as an everyday consideration in our methodological thinking.

[1] Van Maanen and Katz's (1976) study of cross-sectional data from subjects in different occupations suggests that obtaining a positive relationship between organizational tenure and satisfaction is dependent on occupation. However, their results still support the expectation that this positive relationship exists for administrators.

[2] Unfortunately, age and tenure often have a strong positive relationship (Pfeffer, 1980). The strength of this relationship in these data ($r = .84$) makes analysis of the entire sample impossible because of problems with multicollinearity. Responses of the thirteen matched pairs were compared using the Wilcoxon ranked-sign test.

[3] Fruin discusses the generalizability of his findings about the Kikkoman Shoyu Company by comparing it with employee and industry characteristics on a national level. He suggests that, if anything, this company should adhere strongly to the traditional conception of Japanese industry, making any deviation from the traditional picture more notable.

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